

Preparing for a PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff

Considerations to help school districts prepare for a PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff, compiled in collaboration with Redwood Empire Schools Insurance Group.

Setting up Notification

PG&E aims to provide 72- to 48-hour notice in advance of a shutoff, though this may not always be possible. It is critical to ensure that the correct contacts within your district are signed up to receive notifications of power shutoffs from PG&E. This can be done through your district's online account portal. Often, the designated contact person defaults to someone in your business office. We recommend having at least three points of contact listed. Consider adding your superintendent and director of facilities.

Planning

It is difficult for PG&E to predict which areas will be impacted far in advance of a weather event, due to a range of variables including the direction of the wind, location of any fires, etc. For this reason, districts are encouraged to prepare both for a small-impact shutoff that may impact just one or two sites, as well as a worst-case scenario power shutoff that could potentially impact all their sites. As well, each school should check their safety plans to ensure that they have protocols for emergencies such as this.

Factors include:

- **School closures:** There is no hard and fast rule for when to close school due to a power outage. Each school/district is unique and should make the best decision to ensure student safety given their local circumstances, including but not limited to: weather, temperature, access to generators, and availability of transportation.
- **Communications:** If power is out, how will you communicate with families regarding school closures? Consider having mobile Wi-Fi hotspots and back-up power. Have a text-messaging alert system in place.
- **Reporting School Closures to SCOE:** In the event that you do need to close school due to a power outage, superintendents should use the normal reporting procedure to notify SCOE so that SCOE may alert the media. This protocol was recently shared with superintendents. Superintendents can contact the SCOE administration office if they need access to this document.
- **Facilities:** Now is the time to assess how your facilities will perform when the power is shutoff. *Considerations include:*
 - For those on wells, will there be adequate water stored until pumping can resume?

- Do you have generators and backup generators? They are recommended for the district office and individual school sites if possible.
- Can windows be opened? Is there adequate ventilation if temperatures are high?
- Do you have emergency lighting and flashlights?
- Do you know the location of your emergency gas shutoffs?
- **Transportation:** Consider how bus routes may be impacted by power outages and have systems in place for transporting students home due to a power outage. Will bus drivers be available if the power goes out mid-day?

Making up School Days

CDE is encouraging school districts to build emergency days into their calendar and use these days in the event of a power shutoff. In-depth information on this, and when it may be appropriate to file a J-13 waiver, [is available here](#).

Additional Resources to Help you Prepare

- <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ep/index.asp> - CA Department of Education Emergency Planning
- <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ep/pspsfaqs.asp> - CA Department of Education FAQ Power Outage
- <https://www.caloes.ca.gov/schools-educators> - Cal OES Emergency Planning for Schools
- <https://www.ready.gov/power-outages> - Department of Homeland Security Power Outages
- https://www.pge.com/en_US/safety/emergency-preparedness/natural-disaster/wildfires/public-safety-power-shutoff-faq.page - PG&E Power Shutoff FAQ's